

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Public Law 107-110

ESEA Title II, Part B

Request for Proposals

Montana

Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) Program

2013-2015 Competitive Grant Application

Due Date: August 31, 2012

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

As of August 1, 2012



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2013 Montana Mathematics and Science Partnerships Frequently Asked Questions
Prepared by the Office of Public Instruction – Denise Juneau, Superintendent – August 2012

**Note to all webinar participants and/or viewers: some of the answers to these frequently asked questions provide more clarification to questions asked during the webinar. The answers to these questions reflect the most up-to-date information we have received from reliable sources. If any information provided in these answers changes we will update this document and change the date on the first page.*

Question 1: Who is eligible to apply for the ESEA Title II, Part B, MSP Grant?

Answer 1: This question has created some confusion and we apologize for that. The confusion lies in the requirement of additional partners. **Only** “Partnerships of local education agencies (LEAs) and postsecondary education institutions may apply to states for sub grants.” In other words, RESAs and Non-Profit Organizations are **not** eligible to apply. Grant applicants, however, are required to address within their applications how they will include the five RESAs as additional partners. The inclusion of other partners is also strongly encouraged.

Question 2: Are the five RESAs able to support each project?

Answer 2: The ESEA Title II, Part B, MSP Request for Proposals requires as active partners Montana’s five Regional Education Service Areas (RESAs). As stated in goal 3 of the RFP, each project will “directly engage the five Regional Education Service Areas (RESAs) as active partners.” The emphasis is placed on the MSP projects’ connections to the RESAs ensuring that the projects build statewide capacity to deliver professional development. Here is the link to the contact information and map for the Montana Regional Education Service Areas: http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/Index.html?gpm=1_12.

Question 3: If a RESA supports a specific project, does that prevent the RESA from supporting other efforts? And, can a RESA specify which project it prefers?

Answer 3: The applicant will describe the process of engaging the RESA network to help meet the goals of the RFP. The RESAs do not need to choose among the projects, because the RESA network will be engaged in the overall statewide design. The applicant may describe ways in which it will engage its own RESA in greater depth, but a plan to involve all RESAs and, subsequently, budget



allocations should be addressed within every application. Every RESA Director should plan to write a letter of support for every application to be submitted.

Question 4: Does a project need to choose between a postsecondary education institution's STEM faculty and a teacher education department faculty member?

Answer 4: Within the ESEA Title II, Part B, MSP Request for Proposals, Program Requirements section, the "Required Partners" states that a partnership must include, "at a minimum an engineering, technology, mathematics, or science department of a postsecondary education institution (STEM)." A partnership may also include an additional STEM or teacher preparation department of a postsecondary education institution. **A strong suggestion is to include both STEM and teacher preparation faculty members.**

V. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

REQUIRED PARTNERS

To be eligible, a partnership must include, at a minimum:

- an engineering, technology, mathematics, or science department of a postsecondary education institution;
- a high-need LEA; and
- Montana's five Regional Education Service Areas.

A partnership may include:

- another science, technology, engineering or mathematics;
- teacher preparation department of a postsecondary education institution;
- additional LEAs, public or private elementary schools or secondary schools, or a consortium of such schools;
- a business; or
- a nonprofit or for-profit organization of demonstrated effectiveness in improving the quality of mathematics and science teachers.

Question 5: What are the Montana STEM Initiative goals for 2012-13?

Answer 5: The three overall goals of the Montana STEM Initiative are:

1. Increase the percentage of K-12 students who demonstrate college and career-readiness in STEM fields.



2. Increase the percentage of students who graduate from a Montana post-secondary institution with a STEM-related degree.
3. Increase the number of STEM-related jobs in Montana

Some of the proposed actions in the draft STEM plan that address these goals and are pertinent to the MSP project include the following:

- Develop audience specific communication materials to raise awareness of the STEM initiative
- Design effective, specific , and sustainable STEM-focused professional development
- Coherence of statewide initiatives related to STEM: Montana Common Core Standards in Mathematics and English/Language Arts, *Next Generation Science Standards*, Graduation Matters Montana
- Identify and disseminate exemplar STEM programs of study
- Identify and disseminate effective instructional materials and best practices for instruction

If you have further questions concerning the STEM initiative contact Kristen Crawford, Science Curriculum Specialist, kcrawford@mt.gov

Question 6: Why is the first year of the MSP funding cycle shorter (running from October 1, 2012-June 30, 2013) than Years two and three?

Answer 6: The ESEA Title II, Part B, MSP Programs are typically funded from July 1-June 30. However, the first year of the Montana 2013-15 grant program will begin October 1. In order to “catch up” with the federal cycle, Year 1 of funding will end June 30, 2013. Budget Years 2 and 3 will begin July 1 and end on June 30. Funds not completely spent in Year 1 may be rolled over into Year 2.

Question 7: What percent of the budget is suggested for the project's external evaluator?



Answer 7: On average projects use 10% of the budget for their external evaluator. However, the applicant will be the best judge for determining the percent of the budget for each item.

Question 8: Does OPI have a list of qualified external evaluators for this grant?

Answer 8: It would be inappropriate for OPI to recommend one external evaluator over another. New applicants who may not know of qualified external evaluators may want to contact past MSP Project Directors to ask for ideas. Many of these directors can be found on the MSP web page by clicking on individual project pages http://www.opi.mt.gov/curriculum/msp/#gpm1_2 (please be advised that many pages are still under construction).

Question 9: Who can be the fiscal agent for the grant?

Answer 9: *Only* the primary applicants, that is, the local education agencies (LEAs) or the postsecondary institutions can be fiscal agents for the grant. Non-profit organizations and RESAs **cannot** be the fiscal agents.

Question 10: Can partnering institutions/applicants share indirect costs?

Answer 10: Yes, but the rate that is used for all who share indirect costs must be the calculated rate of the primary applicant.

Question 11: What partner is responsible for student data collection?

Answer 11: LEA's will be responsible for collecting student data and reporting the data collected to the grantee. Clarification of this responsibility must be made to the LEAs as part of the partnership.

Question 12: What would OPI/Education Northwest evaluate about a single project if the project's evaluation isn't enough?

Answer 12: The ESEA Title II, Part B, MSP Program requires that a qualified external project evaluator must be used by each MSP grant recipient in order to "design, implement, and manage an evaluation and accountability system that includes rigorous objectives used to measure the formative and summative



impact of the project." The role of Education Northwest will be to consult with OPI in order to assess the overall effectiveness of the MSP program within our state. It will be much less extensive than in the past and will not serve the same purpose as each project's individual evaluator.

Question 13 How would an applicant address the math-science partnership between the two grants to be described in the proposal?

Answer 13: The ESEA Title II, Part B, MSP Request for Proposals, II. Goals of Montana MSP Program states that "the OPI will award the 2013-2015 ESEA Title II, Part B MSP funding to two partnerships: one for mathematics; one for science. The two projects will improve K-12 math or science student learning and math and science teaching skills by implementing high-quality professional learning; collaborating and coordinating with one another and the Regional Education Service Area (RESA) network, and supporting and interacting with the Montana STEM Initiative. The collaboration and coordination between the two awardees are at a project level. Addressing a connection between math and science content (common standards) in the proposal will strengthen the goals; improve student learning and teaching skills through high-quality professional learning and collaborate and coordinate with RESAs.

Question 14: How much of this proposal should focus on the 3-year big picture versus details about the funded year 1?

Answer 14: The proposal should include a 3-year vision. A larger portion of the proposal will be in the description of year 1 due to the need to establish the setting of systems approach and ground work for the following two years. The proposal outlines a three year set of expectations. Therefore, a clear description for the three years is expected.

